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The ABS considers requests for new or changed topics for the Census against a set of criteria. 2021 Census topics are also reviewed against the same criteria. This process identifies if the topic should be recommended to the Australian Government for inclusion in the 2026 Census. These criteria have been informed by the United Nations [Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses](#) (https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fstats.un.org%2Funsd%2Fdemographic-social%2Fstandards-and-methods%2Ffiles%2FPrinciples_and_Recommendations%2FPopulation-and-Housing-Censuses%2FSeries_M67rev3-E.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Claurence.kelson%40abs.gov.au%7C7ede951f052e41334cd308db10531a92%7C34cdb737c4fa4c219a3488ac2d721f88%7C1%7C0%7C638121721344138278%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FXqbUc6wZATMp6O%2BP7NdGIda6WebTsLtFXz3SdmLjbs%3D&reserved=0).

A successful Census relies on strong community support. This support is achieved through collecting data of national importance while also ensuring the Census is easy to complete and not seen as being too intrusive.

The first step in this process is to assess the public value of collecting data on the topic. To do this, we collate the evidence provided in the submissions by topic and then consider whether:

Criteria	For example
1. The topic is of current national importance.	• data is required for an electoral or legislative purpose. • data is needed to support policy development, planning or program monitoring. • data is used for research purposes.
2. There is a need for data at the national level, and either the local level or for small population groups.	• data is needed at the national level and/or is required for international comparability. • data is needed for small population groups. • data is needed for small geographic areas. • the value of the topic is enhanced through combining with other characteristics collected in the Census or with administrative data.
3. There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.	• there is a need for time series data on the topic. • the topic is likely to remain relevant in the future. • data collected on the topic will have enduring value.

The ABS further assesses topics that rate strongly against the public value criteria. This assessment helps to determine if the Census is the most appropriate way to provide data on the topic. The criteria are:

Criteria	For example
4. There are no other suitable alternative data sources or solutions that could meet the topic need.	- the topic need is not met or likely to be met in the near future by an ABS survey or from administrative sources. - data to meet the topic need cannot be produced through integration of existing data sources. - there are extensive barriers to accessing alternate data sources.
5. Data on the topic can be collected efficiently.	- the topic will not require multiple questions or a large number of response categories. - data collected on the topic will not require extensive processing or coding. - the collection of the topic will not significantly add to the overall cost of the Census.
6. A representative of the household would be willing and able to answer questions on the topic for each member of the household.	- the topic can be collected in a simple question or questions using a form that the household completes themselves. - the question(s) will not require lengthy or complex explanation or instruction. - the question(s) is likely to be easily understood. - respondents will easily know the answer to the question(s). - the question(s) is easy and quick to answer. - the topic is not an unreasonable intrusion in the right to privacy - respondents will be willing to answer accurately.

In addition to assessing the topics individually, the ABS considers if the combination of topics will maintain a high level of public support for the Census. This includes the overall size and complexity of the Census form, and if collecting data on a topic will impact how the public answers questions on other topics.